



# Press Release



**Congressman John Conyers, Jr.  
Michigan, 14<sup>th</sup> District**

**Ranking Member, U.S. House Judiciary Committee  
Dean, Congressional Black Caucus**

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## **Conyers Introduces the “Rebuild Lives and Families Re-Entry Enhancement Act of 2005”**

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman John Conyers, Jr. issued the following statement today regarding the introduction of the “Rebuild Lives and Families Re-Entry Enhancement Act of 2005.”

“This legislation will be the next important step in establishing policy to help the men and women emerging from our nation’s prisons and jails re-integrate into society and rebuild their lives.

While our national crime rates have fallen over the last decade, we have seen an unprecedented explosion in our prison and jail populations. Over two million prisoners are now held in federal and state prisons and local jails. Each year, approximately 650,000 people return to their communities following a prison or jail sentence, resulting in more than 6.7 million under some form of criminal justice supervision.

Reentry refers to the return of incarcerated individuals from America’s jails and prisons to the community and their reintegration into society. There is a pressing need to provide these individuals with the education and training necessary to obtain and hold onto steady jobs, undergo drug treatment, and get medical and mental health services. However, they are confronted with the “prison after imprisonment” - a plethora of seemingly endless obstacles and impediments which stymie successful re-integration into society. These obstacles have substantially contributed to the historically high rate of recidivism, with two-thirds of returning prisoners having been rearrested for new crimes within three years.

This legislation is designed to assist high-risk, high-need offenders who have served their prison sentences, but who pose the greatest risk of reoffending upon release because they lack the education, job skills, stable family or living arrangements, and the substance abuse treatment and other mental and medical health services they need to successfully reintegrate into society. Title I of the bill reauthorizes and enhances our early adult and juvenile reentry programs to broaden the availability of critical ex-offender services, while Title II addresses the substantive federal barriers to successful reentry. Both titles include provisions requiring that the funded programs be rigorously evaluated and the results widely disseminated, so that reentry programs can be modified as needed, to ensure that recidivism is reduced and public safety enhanced.

A recent study by Peter D. Hart Research Associates reveals that Americans strongly favor rehabilitation and reentry programs as the best method of insuring public safety. With this changing paradigm in public opinion, the opportunity is ripe to sensibly reassess the role and impact of criminal justice policies. This legislation translates this emerging public perception into balanced policies and procedures which dismantle the structural impediments to successful reintegration into society.”